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Raising their voices

The changing status and role of women in Nepal is breaking down gender inequality



EDITORIAL

RAISING THEIR VOICES

Nepal has long been a patriarchal society that's seen women discriminated against. The power imbalance affects women's social, cultural, economic and political participation and has left many living in poverty.

However, change has begun and slowly the barriers to gender equality are being challenged at both the grassroots level and across all layers of government. INF continues to advocate for women's rights and seeks to empower women through many of its programs. This issue is themed around gender and the challenges and changes taking place in Nepal. Meet INF's new Gender Officer on page 4.

JOURNEY WITH JUMLA

In the high hills and remote villages of Kanakasundari Rural Municipality, communities face many challenges. INF is beginning new work there to help families overcome poverty and food insecurity, raise awareness about critical issues of health and hygiene, and to empower women.

Read about the life-changing work in Jumla on page 1.

REFLECTIONS AT THE TOP

Former INF International Director Alastair Seaman reflects on the five years he spent leading the INF international family of organisations and Phil Morris, former CEO of INF Australia, shares his passion for Nepal and plans to return as the new INF International Nepal Country Director in mid 2019 [page 10].

RESILIENCE FOR THE FUTURE

INF's Disaster Response & Resilience Department [DRRD] has a vision to see every community INF works in better prepared for natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes. As a result, the team has been busy running workshops and training for Self-Help Groups and local authorities across the west of Nepal. Read about their disaster resilience work on page 11.

Krishna Adhikari
Executive Director, INF Nepal

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Life in all its fullness for Nepal's poor and disadvantaged

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Cover
Self Help Group [SHG] members in Uwa, Rolpa posing for a group photo during filming of Community Resilience Project [CRP]

PHOTO: ANIL RAI, 2019

Journey with Jumla



BUILDING ON 40 YEARS OF WORK IN JUMLA, INF HAS RECENTLY BEGUN THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND LIVELIHOOD [WEAL] PROJECT.

Ben Thurley *INF Australia CEO, reports*

Kanakasundari Rural Municipality is steep and rugged land in the north of Jumla District and one of the most remote and disadvantaged parts of Jumla. It is starkly beautiful and hills are achingly terraced to grow wheat, millet and barley. But with water in short supply in many places – for both drinking and for irrigation – most families are not able to produce enough food to feed every member of the family year round. They rely on meagre cash income to supplement their food stores and many family members will leave their villages for months at a time in search of work.

Communities face many challenges, such as food insecurity, limited water and irrigation, low levels of education and awareness of critical issues of health and hygiene, and poor access to roads, schools, clinics and other government services. And within those communities, it is the women of Kanakasundari who do it toughest. In general, women work the hardest, eat less [and less nutritious] food than men, face the dangers of pregnancy and childbirth with little support and experience, entrenched discrimination and disempowerment at every level of society, from household to government.

The traditional practice of chhaupadi [exclusion and isolation of menstruating girls and women], although illegal, is still widespread here. As well as exposing women and girls to the dangers of illness, injury and assault, this practice starkly underscores the inferior status accorded to women and the additional burdens they are expected to bear.

In light of this grinding poverty and in consultation with local government, INF has begun a new community work, the **Women's Empowerment and Livelihood [WEAL]** project, here. The heart of the project will be formation and support of Self-Help Groups: gathering and empowering women to identify issues, pool funds for group projects, and take action together to improve their communities.

Building on long experience of working in other parts of Jumla, the WEAL project aims to reduce poverty, improve the productivity of family farms, improve the health and resilience of the communities, and to ensure the full inclusion of women and people with disabilities in all aspects of community life. Achieving these things will not come at a sprint, but will be more like a marathon that starts with the patient building of trust with communities.

Local community mobilisers have already begun to work, facilitating meetings among the women of Kanakasundari to identify challenges they face and plan ways to address them. Over time they will provide training on issues of human rights, hygiene and sanitation, improved agriculture, and more. Led by INF's experienced community health and development staff, these [mostly young] community mobilisers are energetic and inspiring, eager to share skills and knowledge and to serve the communities they come from.



Juna Devi

One of them, **Jun Devi Pyakurel**, who also recently completed training as an auxiliary nurse-midwife, explains why she wanted to work as a community mobiliser. *“We know that INF is on the side of the poor and works with the poorest people,”* she said. *“We also want to work with INF to help our community and to inform and empower women.”*

The response of women in the community is often no less enthusiastic. During my time visiting Kanakasundari in November, a brief community meeting was called to allow me the chance to meet community members and start to get a sense of the work they would do together. Because INF had already held an introductory meeting here, INF’s team leader, Pramila Mahat, offered a short apology as our meeting began. *“I know,”* she said, *“That everyone is very busy right now with work and festival preparations. But we have a visitor from Australia who wants to see our work and understand the situation people face here. So I’m sorry for causing any problems. It will only be a short meeting.”*

One older woman, **Bautili Rokaya**, burst into laughter and called out, *“It’s no problem. Come as often as you like. We want to learn everything you can teach us.”*

INF has journeyed with communities in Jumla District for over forty years, initially establishing a leprosy and tuberculosis clinic in the district in 1978 and later developing community-based rehabilitation, community development and nutrition programs. Over that time, lives have been saved and communities changed. Women, low-caste groups and people with disabilities who had experienced discrimination and disrespect have been empowered and supported to claim their God-given dignity and rights.

Just as we have seen it happen in other parts of Jumla, we pray and confidently trust that this work of empowerment among the women of Kanakasundari will produce a harvest that transforms the whole community.

Please consider supporting this new work in Jumla in prayer and finance [**\$25 per month**] by joining us to **Journey with Jumla**.

All Journey with Jumla supporters receive quarterly newsletters [and more] tracking the progress of the project, giving you an inside view of community development. From the first days of the community development process to the project’s conclusion, you will share the hopes and hurts, the challenges and celebrations of these communities. Sign up at:

WWW.INF.ORG/JOURNEY-WITH-JUMLA



A woman busy in her household chores



Community Mobilisers from Jumla posing for a group photo

From the ground up



Nilisha Lama Karki reports on INF’s work in Kaski as projects are being handed over to community run groups and the local government.



INF completed a resilient and accessible local government office, so that they can provide quality services to all

INF has been working in Kaski in Nepal’s western region over the past five years. Initially the work involved disability and HIV/AIDS projects but following the devastating earthquakes of 2015 INF expanded its work to include emergency relief in Gorkha, the epicentre of the quake. Those projects have since grown and INF has been delivering post-earthquake reconstruction, rehabilitation and community resilience programmes. INF has focused on the immediate and long-term needs of those living with a disability in Gorkha, Lamjung, Kaski, Tanahun, Parbat, Baglung and Myagdi.



INF’s work in Kaski has been two-fold, focused on empowering people with disabilities, and ensuring that their rights and concerns are recognised and taken into account by the community generally. People living with a disability experience high levels of poverty and being poor increases a person’s chance of having a disability. In response, INF’s programmes [**GRACE, SHELTER and CBR**] aimed to support and empower people with disabilities, their families and representing organisations through increasing their

access to support services, health care, education, livelihood opportunities and social activities, as well as through political empowerment. They also worked to identify and overcome the barriers in society that people with disabilities face, including physical accessibility, communication, discriminatory attitudes and legislation, so that persons with disabilities are included in all aspects of development.

Working with local disability organisations [DPOs] INF has been focused on ensuring the long-term sustainability of its work in the region. Many DPOs have now taken responsibility for the ongoing work, others have transitioned to become cooperatives and the local authorities are taking responsibly for other parts of the work.

INF’s Kaski staff feel confident that people living with a disability have gained a voice that will be heard long after INF stops working in these areas.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS

-  **5** RESOURCE SCHOOLS & HOSTELS BUILT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES
-  **27** MODEL HOUSES CONSTRUCTED
-  **100** INFRASTRUCTURE MODIFICATIONS FOR ACCESSIBILITY
-  **105** INDIVIDUAL HOUSES RECONSTRUCTED POST-EARTHQUAKE
-  **130** SELF-HELP GROUPS FORMED
-  **1500** PEOPLE USED SMALL GRANTS AND LOANS TO GROW AND ESTABLISH BUSINESSES

PRAY | DONATE | JOIN US | SHARE – We are thankful for the work that INF has been able to be a part of in the Kaski region that has helped to make the communities and services more welcoming and accessible for those living with a disability

Breaking down barriers

INF's commitment to gender equality both within the organisation and throughout its work with some of Nepal's most marginalised women has seen the creation of a new role – INF's *Gender Officer*.

Cherry Mawson, INF Australia's *Programs Officer*, chats with **Shakuntala Subedi** who recently took up the new position.



WHAT WILL YOU DO AS INF'S 'GENDER OFFICER'?

I will strengthen pathways for gender equality within the communities we work and within INF. I will generate new ideas and approaches for gender-related activities; support the management, monitoring and delivery of programs that bring gender equality to our work; liaise with staff, government and other organisations to help them consider gender issues; and support the *POWER project, among other things!

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO PAY ATTENTION TO GENDER?

'Gender' refers to the learned behaviour that society considers appropriate for men and women – a set of rules which often benefits men and keeps women in their place.

Gender is an important consideration in development. It is a way of looking at how social norms and power structures impact on the lives and opportunities available to different groups of men and women. Compared with men, women control fewer political and economic resources, including land, employment and traditional positions of authority in Nepal. They face unequal power relations and barriers due to a patriarchal society. Women are frequently subjected to rape and domestic abuse, and young women risk being trafficked. There are also many superstitions and taboos

related to caste and menstruation leading to discrimination towards women.

There has been drastic positive change in the role and status of women in Nepal, but there is still a lot more to be done. Equality for women is an important pillar for economic empowerment and sustainable development.

WHY ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY?

I'm from and have worked in the Karnali Province, the least developed province in Nepal, so I'm very aware of development issues in Nepal. Having seen the condition of women first-hand I've always wanted to advocate for them. Gender inequality is deep rooted and some people are comfortable not to change, especially those who benefit from it. As a result, I have always aspired to work towards equality for women and children in Nepal. It really bothers me that we still have so far to go, but the positive changes we're now seeing in gender equality encourage me to keep going.

IS THERE SOMEONE WHO INSPIRES YOU AND YOUR WORK?

For me, my brother is the person who inspires me to work in this field. He is the most influential person in my life. He has supported me, cheered me on, given me unbiased advice, and has simply been there for me my entire journey. His name is Santosh Sharma.

WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU SEE AHEAD?

There are a number of challenges, including the systemic barriers created by a traditionally patriarchal society; gender equality being considered too provocative; structural inequality [especially at the decision-making level]; and gender bias within the workplace.

WHAT IS INF DOING TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY?

In addition to appointing me as the Gender Officer, INF is producing a gender policy to promote gender equality within INF and in its work at the community level. To further promote women's leadership within INF, I am keen to see more women recruited in leadership positions and in field offices; formalised mentorship and training opportunities; and the establishment of a strong women's network in the organisation.

WHAT PROGRESS DO YOU HOPE TO SEE IN FIVE YEARS' TIME?

I hope we will have a more gender-friendly workplace, with more women in key decision-making positions. I also hope we effectively implement our Gender and Social Inclusion policy, and that gender is thought about throughout the whole organisation.

emPOWERed!

The *POWER project focuses on increasing women's leadership and participation in local organisations and governance structures, to advance the status and rights of women. It hopes to contribute towards achieving gender equality within INF and the communities it works with.

HOW?

- Work with existing self-help groups and co-operatives in communities, as well as community organisations, to conduct campaigns for gender equality, including on issues of violence against women
- Train a network of women from marginalised communities as Human Rights Defenders, to champion women's rights
- Work with self-help groups to advocate local government for increased access to services for women, and to seek out government resources
- Train newly elected local governments to consider gender when planning and budgeting local resources
- Improve gender equality within INF, for example in its policies and female staff representation

INF is excited to be working on this project in collaboration with three other Christian organisations in Nepal: **Lutheran World Fellowship Nepal**, **Caritas**, and the **Adventist Development and Relief Agency [ADRA]**. In partnership these organisations will be able to share learning, resources and make a greater impact.



The POWER project receives support from the Australian Government through the **Australian NGO Cooperation Programme [ANCP]**.

*POWER [*Promotion of Women's Empowerment and Rights Targeting Rural Women*]

PRAY | DONATE | JOIN US | SHARE-Please pray with us for Shakuntala Subedi as she works with INF staff to empower women and break down gender inequality. Thank God for the new POWER programme that INF is collaborating on with other organisations to advance the status of women in Nepal.

Women's rights are human rights

Shakuntala Subedi, INF's new *Gender Officer*, explores the ongoing barriers to gender equality in Nepal as well as the significant gains made in recent years.

Nepal has predominantly been a patriarchal society where women are largely subordinate to men in many aspects of life. Females are discriminated against from birth, which hinders their social, cultural, economic and political participation. There is a huge income gap between men and women both in terms of employment opportunities and in pay inequity. Women are not equally represented at any level of government, or in business, and violence against women remains a serious and growing issue.

Women living in rural and remote areas experience even worse discrimination. They have poorer outcomes in areas such as health, education, income generation, access to policy-making and human rights. There are also firmly entrenched practices and superstitions that lead to harm and discrimination against women.

As a result women across Nepal are more likely to live in poverty than men.

However, positive change in the role and status of women in Nepal has thinned the barriers to gender inequality. For the first time in Nepal's history a minimum of 33% of the constituent assembly must be represented by women. In 2015, the first female head of state was elected in President **Bidya Devi Bhandari**.

The Nepali government has established legal and institutional mechanisms including the National Human Rights Commission and the National Women's Commission. Gender is receiving increased attention in government development programmes, plans, policies and budgets.

Unfortunately the status of Nepali women remains vulnerable because of weak state mechanisms and a lack of enforcing those laws, policies and plans. There is much for Nepal to do to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goal of gender parity by 2030.

INF is increasing its focus on promoting, empowering and improving women's status in Nepal. INF celebrates International Women's Day and will participate in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence campaign this year. There are many INF projects that seek to empower women including **Anti-Human Trafficking [AHT]**, **Community Based Rehabilitation [CBR]**, **Maternal and Child Health care [MCH]**, **Community Health and Development [CHD]** and the

new **Promotion of Women's Empowerment and Rights [POWER]** targeting rural women. INF's Self Help Groups [SHGs] also play a key role in raising women's voices and providing opportunities for women to share and discuss issues affecting them. SHGs learn about their rights, legal protections and find solidarity and support within their communities.

As a nation we must understand that equality for women and minorities is an important pillar for economic empowerment and sustainable development. Women's rights are human rights.

PRAY | DONATE | JOIN US | SHARE – Please pray for women in Nepal, particularly those living in rural and remote areas who experience greater discrimination and poverty. We are thankful for the significant changes being made to improve the lives of women across Nepal.



A mother cooks nutritious meal for her baby in Jumla



INF brings hope to an Spinal Cord Injury patient through CBR project

A courageous contribution

Sharon Joshua Tiwari, INF Nepal's *Communications Coordinator*, celebrates the women who have shaped INF's work since its early beginnings more than 65 years ago.

INF's story began with a group of courageous women. Since then women have continued to make an extraordinary contribution through their prayer, service and generous giving to the work of INF. These women were from diverse backgrounds, cultures, races and walks of life contributing to INF and the community at large. Many were from Nepal, some travelled from overseas while others never came to Nepal but were wholly committed to God's work here. No matter where they came from; prayed from; gave from or whatever position or status they held, these women poured out their hearts, tears and sweat for INF and Nepal. We are thankful for each and every one of them.

From pioneering visionary women like **Dr Lilly O'Hanlon** and **Hilda Steel**, who envisioned life in all its fullness, to all the action women on the ground tirelessly working to bring that vision to life, to the hidden heroic women who remained back-stage and didn't capture much of the Limelight. All together they have made a faithful contribution. Some witnessed the fruits of their labour, while others would never know the far-reaching impacts of their contribution.

They rose above the ordinary role of every day women to take on the extra ordinary role by marching beyond the call of duty and touching the lives of many others. Some names we still remember, some, just their faces; some are remembered for their service and others, their lives.

Their contribution in making INF what it is today should inspire a new generation of women in Nepal and around the world to be courageous and to walk an extra mile.

These women often demonstrated humility in the face of adversity. Their faith and vision was grounded in allowing their Shepherd to lead and guide them as they journeyed through the unknown. More stories of courageous women in INF are yet to be written as a new generation comes and goes by.

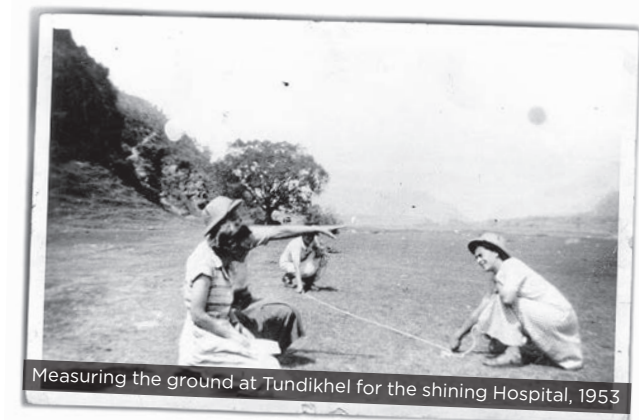
Will your story be next?

Lily grew up in England, and wrote in her diary "Confirmation of call to Nepal, January 1, 1933" not long after arriving in the city of Gorakhpur, 60 miles south of the Nepal border. Hilda Steel from the Republic of Ireland had heard the same call. Her diary reads "Confirmation of call to Nepal, July 15, 1933." Light Dawns in Nepal by Tom Hale

PRAY | DONATE | JOIN US | SHARE – You can share the story of how God has worked through INF in Nepal over more than 65 years by inviting a speaker to your community or church group. Contact your local INF office using their details on the back page. If you are a Christian interested in working in an exciting, international cross-cultural mission please email recruitment@inf.org



Shining Community Health Centre works in the early days of INF, Pokhara



Measuring the ground at Tundikhel for the shining Hospital, 1953

What's happening around the world...

Be encouraged to
PRAY | DONATE | JOIN US | SHARE

Australia

TRIPS & TREKS IN 2018



In October last year, a group of six Australians went on a Vision Trip, travelling around Nepal to see INF's work. Then in November, a group of newly graduated high school students trekked to Annapurna Base Camp along with some of their parents. They raised about \$6,800 for Green Pastures Hospital! To find out more or register your interest in joining a trek this October, or a Vision Trip in 2020, go to: www.inf.org/visiontrips/

MOUNTAINS & VALLEYS



In November, INF Australia's South Australian Representatives [**Tom and Nicola McGunnigle-Hilder**] hosted an INF event to share stories of our work in Nepal, hear INF Workers Terry and Julie Steven, and run our participatory game simulating life in remote, rural Nepal, 'Seasons'. Everyone had a fantastic time together. If you would also like to share INF's story with your church, school or group this year, INF Australia would love to hear from you. To book a speaker or find out more, go to www.inf.org.au

WELCOME STEVE BARNETT



INF Australia was excited to welcome **Steve Barnett** to the team in January. As the *Australian Programs Manager*, Steve will play an important role in developing relationships with individuals, churches and other groups around the country in support of INF. If you'd like to meet Steve for a coffee or give him a call to find out about how you can support INF, you can get in touch via 0406 855 423 or steve.barnett@inf.org.au

Canada

JOINED THE MEETING



Jenny Ibbotson and Carol Scovil [both members of the INF Canada board] were glad to join the wider INF family for board meeting in Pokhara last November.



New Zealand

NOTES FOR NEPAL

New Zealand supporters have been raising funds for INF's work by donating their spare foreign cash. The funds are being used to support the ongoing rebuilding from the 2015 earthquake. To find our more contact INF NZ Director **Sean Marston** director@inf.org.nz

SHARES FOR NEPAL

INF NZ is also encouraging people to consider cashing in any shares that are no longer useful to support INF's work. To find out more head to www.inf.org/inf-new-zealand/

Nepal

PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE

INF Nepal is organising its first Partnership Conference in Pokhara from 20-22 November 2019. We would like to welcome you or someone from your organisation to join us. Let's come together to share, learn from each other and develop our future partnership **to serve** the most disadvantaged people of Nepal. Forward together!

PASS IT ON!

According to recent surveys, two or three people read each copy of a contemporary mission magazine. After reading it, why not pass on your copy of 'Today in Nepal' to a friend? Or share the magazine online at www.inf.org/resources/reports-and-publications/

PLEASE NOTE

Letters and emails are most welcome and should be addressed to TiN, Editor, INF, PO Box 5, Pokhara, tin@inf.org or get in touch via Facebook or Twitter.

Readers are welcome to re-use articles from 'Today in Nepal' with due acknowledgement to INF – Ed.

If you've been encouraged or inspired by any of these activities, get in touch with your local INF office [see back cover for details] or our website on how you could support us through praying, donating, serving with us, or sharing our stories!

UK

REBUILDING HOMES



INF UK supporters have raised [at publication] over £20,000 to help rebuild homes for people who lost theirs in the July landslides of 2018 in Nepal. The heavy rains buried houses and swept away peoples' belongings and livelihoods. Support the ongoing rebuild www.inf.org.uk/home-for-christmas-appeal/

NEPAL CONNECTION

Meet some of our colleagues from Nepal at our annual day conference on 22 June 2019 in Birmingham, UK – via live video link. Please note this date in your diary – we would love to see you on the day. To find out more contact the INF UK team prayer@inf.org.uk

Farewell Alastair



Photo: Clive Thomas

Alastair Seaman reflects on the past five years as INF's International Director.

I sat in Kathmandu airport in May 2013 and read Jesus' words from

The blind see, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor.

MATTHEW 11:5

I'd been in Nepal to explore the possibility of returning to work with INF as International Director and as I read these words I was reminded that INF was engaged in some of God's 'core business.'

Shortly after I started we had a time of prayer and conversation across the INF family about what our priorities should be for the coming five years. It was remarkable and exciting how the same things consistently emerged. We needed to put Jesus at the centre of our work, become more creative and innovative in our approaches and focus on empowering the people we worked with.

Five years later it's amazing to see how far INF has travelled towards these goals. The most obvious changes have been at Green Pastures Hospital where we have made significant strides in our ambition to be a Centre of Excellence in disability prevention and care, increased our revenue from local sources and strengthened our pastoral care work.

Changes are noticeable and attract our attention but over the last five years I've also been inspired by the great work that hasn't changed much; the compassion and care shown by staff in our hospitals and the dedication of our field staff who work with some of the country's poorest communities. It's been a joy to see a talented new generation of Nepali professionals and leaders take their place in INF and to see that God is still calling people from around the world to join Him in this core business.

Welcome Phil

Phil Morris has a heart for Nepal and has been working with INF for almost a decade. He reflects on his most recent role as INF Australia CEO and what lies ahead.



Serving as CEO of INF Australia was a huge privilege. Our family was warmly welcomed and I quickly learned about INF's amazing heritage in Australia and appreciated working with and learning from people who had served – through faithful prayer, generous giving and selfless sacrifice – for many years to support INF.

Although the INF Australia team spent a lot of time making plans and strategies, we were often surprised and humbled by ways in which God was at work. It was during difficult times, like the 2015 earthquakes or the regular visa 'crises' that we spent more time in prayer and sometimes only in retrospect saw glimpses of how God was at work. Growing support from the Nepali community in Australia was a great encouragement and answer to prayer, but one of the real privileges was walking alongside people going from Australia to serve in Nepal.

As a family, our return to Nepal is both exciting and daunting. Saying goodbye to familiar faces and places, starting new schools and roles, unsure what or where we will return to - there is loss and grieving, but also opportunity and expectation.

Nepal has changed rapidly in recent years and INF will need to continue adapting to keep up. It will be an honour to serve with INF International and see where God is leading INF next.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your path straight.

PROVERBS 3:5-6

Phil has been appointed as INF's new International Nepal Country Director and will take over from Chris Drew in mid-2019.

PRAY | DONATE | JOIN US | SHARE – We thank God for the fellowship of people from across Nepal and around the world who love Nepal and who are motivated by God's love to serve some of its poorest people.



Jhatpat Bag Emergency Bag

An emergency bag can help prepare vulnerable communities

Disaster Response and Resilience trainer, **Hari Sharan Adhikari**, shares how an emergency bag can help prepare vulnerable communities.

Jugalawati Bhar is part of an INF Self-Help Group in Maharajgunj Municipality in Kapilvastu District. She lives in a small village by a river. Each year her community is vulnerable to flooding from the monsoon as deforestation accelerates in the nearby forest. Fire is also a constant threat. She needs to have emergency documents, medicine and equipment safe and easily accessible. Sadly these are often the very things that are lost in natural disasters and are expensive and difficult to replace.

INF's Community Resilience Project has been implemented in the region over the past two years. The Disaster Response and Resilience team as well as Community Mobilisers having been forming Self-Help Groups and training them in disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response and resilience. As part of the training the '**Jhatpat bag**,' an emergency bag, was initiated to safeguard important items in a flood or fire.

"After learning about the emergency bag in the group I have kept important materials and documents in the separate bag," says Jugalawati. "Not only that, I am also teaching my family members, relatives and neighbours about the ways to prepare the emergency bag, things to be included and its use and importance during disaster. The good news is that people are now aware of the Emergency Bag and have started to prepare it."

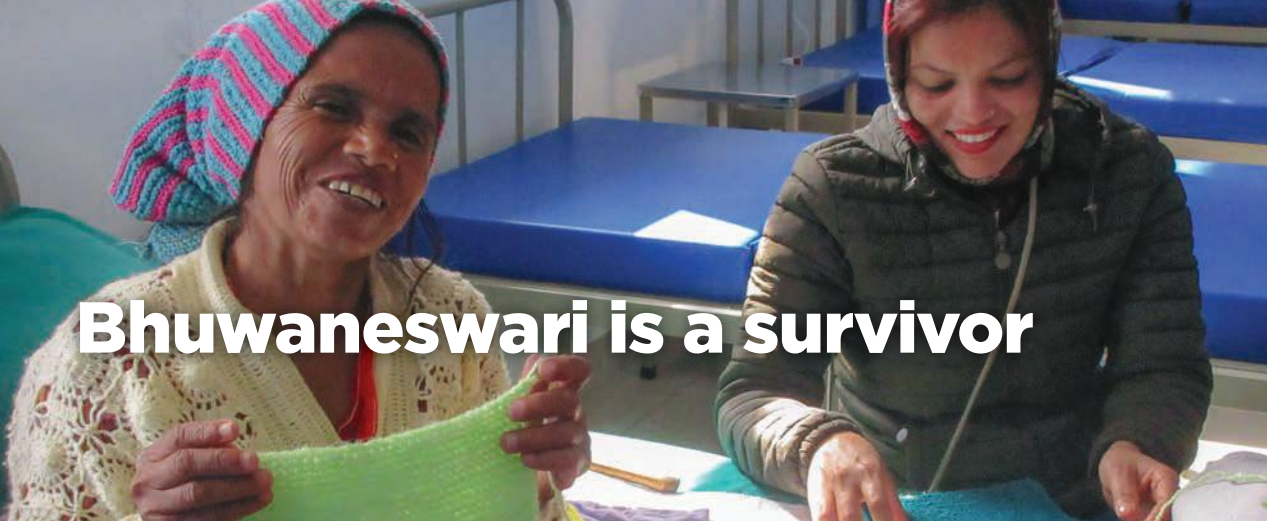
DISASTER RESPONSE AND RESILIENCE

The Jhatpat bag is one simple example of INF's Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience work.

During the last three months of 2018 the **Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Department [DRRD]** has implemented the Community Resilience Project in the districts of Rolpa, Kapilvastu and Lamjung; and the Recovery Project in Dordi Rural Municipality. The department has also been running workshops as well as First Aid and Search Rescue Refresher Training to local government officials and church groups in Kapilvastu, Rolpa, Jumla, Surkhet and Lamjung. In addition to training INF has also been supplying local authorities and communities with first aid equipment including hammers, stretchers, ropes, tarpaulins, tents, blankets, buckets, masks, gloves and safety shoes. INF has developed good relationships with local governments in each of its working areas.

INF DRRD staff have also received training in climate change resilience incorporating livelihood and disaster mitigation techniques. The department has also recently set up a disaster storage area in Green Pastures Hospital Complex.

PRAY | DONATE | JOIN US | SHARE – Please pray for INF Nepal's vision to see every community it works with prepared for and resilient to natural disasters. If you would like to contribute to this work please go to www.inf.org/DONATE



Bhuwaneswari is a survivor

Married at seventeen, **Bhuwaneswari** and her husband were poor and lived in a remote village of Nepal. When Bhuwaneswari fell pregnant she was unable to access antenatal care, as there were no nearby health facilities. Her labour was long and after seven days she delivered a dead baby boy. The protracted labour had created an obstetric fistula, a hole in her bladder, and she began to leak urine constantly. She felt horrible, cold and ashamed of the awful smell.

Her second pregnancy also ended in tragedy. As she went into labour her father-in-law fell while working on the roof. He passed away and the next morning Bhuwaneswari delivered a second dead baby. The delivery meant she was considered unclean and as her house was full of mourners, custom said she had to live in the stable. She was alone without food or help for thirteen days grieving the loss of her son and her father-in-law.

Finally at age 27 she delivered her third child and despite the continued incontinence she was filled with joy for her baby girl. Several years on while cutting branches from a tree she fell and broke her spine. She was bedridden and unable to walk for two years. Her husband found a second wife who he brought into their family home.

In 2012 Bhuwaneswari's cousin encouraged her to attend an INF fistula camp. The journey was long and difficult and she arrived too late to be seen. The following year she returned and had surgery but sadly it was unsuccessful.

Last year an INF outreach worker visited her at home. Bhuwaneswari was convinced to have another surgery, which successfully closed the fistula. However the extent of her injuries meant she was not entirely dry.

Bhuwaneswari has stayed at INF Surkhet for three months working with the rehabilitation team. She can now walk with one stick and a follow up surgery will help further improve her condition.

Bhuwaneswari has had a difficult life from the start but she is a survivor.

RESTORING DIGNITY

Obstetric fistula, a birth injury resulting from protracted labour, is a totally preventable disaster. It's found in countries where women have little to no access to health care during delivery. Women with fistula are unable to stop the continuous leak of urine and sometimes stool. They often become isolated, abandoned and lose their dignity.

INF has been working since 2009 to not only treat women with fistula but also educate health workers across the west of Nepal how to prevent fistula. For ten years INF ran temporary camps at Mid-Western Regional hospital for two to three weeks a year treating almost 300 women. Since June 2018 we

have had a beautiful new fistula centre where women can come at any time and stay as long as necessary so that fistula and its complications can be treated.

The women we see with fistula are courageous. We don't know how many may have taken their own lives unable to bear the shame and grief. Those we see are the survivors.

Authors **Dr Shirley Heywood** and **Sandra Chinnery** have worked tirelessly with an incredible team to address obstetric fistula in Nepal.

PRAY | DONATE | JOIN US | SHARE – We thank God for the provision of the new fistula centre in Surkhet that will continue to provide life-changing surgery and treatment for women.

Critical Vacancies

Is God calling you to Nepal? INF uses a special combination of expatriate and Nepali expertise to apply international level practice in a way that is relevant to the local context, always with the aim of increasing capacity in Nepal. Here are a number of current key expatriate needs in the organisation - to explore more opportunities to serve please visit www.inf.org/join-us

PRIMARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS



Many of INF's expatriate families live outside Kathmandu where the needs are greatest. To enable families to stay in these areas we need primary and middle school teachers to work in our small study centre in Pokhara. We have an urgent need for teachers for the 2018/19 academic year.

SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS



INF supports suitable candidates to serve as teachers in Nepal at KISC, the international Christian school in Kathmandu. KISC's vision is to be living witnesses of Christ's love through excellent education. For more information on the needs, go to <https://www.kisc.edu.np/vacancies/>

HUMAN RESOURCES ADVISOR



INF Nepal [our major implementing partner] needs help to develop its HR capacity so that the organisation can realise its exciting vision.

EAR SURGEON



Green Pastures Hospital is looking for an ear surgeon to take the pioneering work of the Ear Centre forward as it provides a much-needed service to the west of Nepal.

MARKETING/MEDIA/COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST

Has God gifted you with communication and media skills to inspire and motivate others? Are you interested in sharing your skills to build the capacity of others? If so, our Communications Department needs you.

ANAESTHETIST

Green Pastures Hospital in Pokhara is looking for an expatriate anaesthetist to work in the hospital and train up a Nepali counterpart.

REHABILITATION PHYSICIAN/DOCTOR

Green Pastures Hospital in Pokhara is looking for a Physiotherapist to help support the expansion of its rehabilitation work.

FUNDRAISER/DONOR RELATIONS SPECIALIST

INF needs a Christian with experience in fundraising, PR or donor relations to support programmes and work with Nepali colleagues.

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

Green Pastures Hospital is looking for a psychologist with an interest in developing the vision to provide holistic care for our patients

PRAY | DONATE | JOIN US | SHARE – If you are a Christian interested in working in an exciting, international, cross-cultural mission then email recruitment@inf.org

partners in prayer

Prayer is the foundation of INF's work.

We thank you for faithfully praying with us and enabling INF's work to bring hope and restoration to Nepal.

Each edition of Today in Nepal includes prayer points for one aspect of our work, covering all areas over the three editions published each year. For up-to date prayer information go to www.inf.org/pray, where you can also sign up to receive monthly PrayerNotes.

This edition features INF's DRRD and IIFS work.

DISASTER RESPONSE AND RESILIENCE DEPARTMENT [DRRD]

Karna Bahadur Gurung is the *Disaster Response and Resilience Coordinator* [currently *Acting DRRD Manager*]. At present, he leads the department and looks after management, planning and supervision of the existing projects being implemented. **Jyoti Bahadur Chhetri** ensures the safety and security of the all the INF offices as he holds the position of *Safety and Security Co-coordinator*. The department has a new recruit in **Sahara Mishra**, *Donor Project Officer*, who supports Karna Gurung in project formulation, monitoring and donor reporting. **Tobias Vokuhl** is *DRRD Tech Coordinator*; and advises on earthquake and flood resistant construction work in INF hospitals and programmes. The logistics and administration are managed by **Jeevan Gurung**, *Admin and Logistic Assistant*, who runs the department's general administration and ensures the availability of resources: regular activities and response. He also is responsible for maintaining disaster response stock through all INF offices. **Hari Sharan Adhikari** is the *DRR trainer* based in Kapilvastu and **Chullu Chaudhary** is the *DRR trainer* based in Sunchahari Rolpa. **Roshan Gurung** is the *DRRD support staff* member who ensures safe travel of the department's personnel and supports the admin and logistic officer of the department.



PRAYER REQUEST:

- We are very thankful to God for the vision of delivering community resilience to reduce the number of casualties and property loss through any disaster occurring in INF working areas
- Grace be to God that the DRRD has been able to achieve a good reputation and track record for the implementation of resilience projects in the communities by strengthening the local government and community members in disaster preparedness, response and resilience
- Please pray for the wisdom of team members in visioning and planning the DRRD's way forward from 2020 onwards, especially after the organisational restructuring.

INF INITIATIVE FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY [IIFS]

IIFS encourages activities that utilise INF's resources and assets to generate income that will support INF Nepal's core activities. Currently, it has seven units such as Craft Centre, Beth Eden Guest house, Canteen, Pharmacy, Café, Farm and Farm Outlets. **Deependra Pahari**, *Manager of IIFS*, is leading the work of IIFS with 19 staff members. As the Manager he is responsible for developing and implementing the financial, production and sales plan for IIFS. **Suresh BK**, *Finance and Admin Officer*, performs the day to day management of financial activities including reporting and governance in accord with agreed annual plans and budgets. He also organises and supervises all of the issues related with administration, finance, logistics and personnel management of IIFS. **Maya Gurung**, *Finance and Admin Assistant* is responsible for providing support for the accounting and financial control of IIFS activities including all day to day administrative work and ensures the smooth running of the IIFS finance department.

Other staff includes **Sushil Tripathee**, **Sushma Gautam**, **Parbati Oli**, **Indra Bahadur KC**, **Dhaniram Neupane**, **Jamuna Devi Poudel**, **Angat Bista**, **Pyari Damai**, **Purna Bahadur Pun**, **Bir Bahadur Khatri**, **Maya Khanal**, **Samsul Miya**, **Yamuna Gharti Magar**, **Bimala BK**, **Sita Bhandari Bista**, **Surya Bahadru Ale Magar**.



PRAYER REQUEST:

- We are grateful to God, that through this initiative we are able to support and contribute to INF's work with the poor and disadvantaged
- This programme has brought a positive impact in the lives of individuals and families by providing job opportunities for people with a disability and/or living in poverty
- It has also given them a dignified role in society
- Please pray for our team members in the different units of IIFS for their health and well-being, also for Godly wisdom to ensure that we as a team can make a fruitful contribution to people's lives
- Pray that IIFS's regular operation and future planned work continues to contribute to INF's income and its vision to become self-sustainable over the coming years.

bible spotlight

A more beautiful kingdom

By Cherry Mawson

The gospels contain powerful stories detailing Jesus' interactions with women. In these he challenges the norms of his day around women's status and role, revealing a more inclusive, more beautiful kingdom.

Jesus is welcomed into a home while travelling on a journey. A woman comes and sits at his feet, listening intently to his teaching. Her sister, Martha, is exhausted from the amount of domestic work that needs doing. But more than that, she is disturbed by her sister's behaviour – there her sister sits, in the distinctly male part of the house, apart from the other women. Her sister sits at the foot of a rabbi, learning, as men that are training to be teachers do.

Horrified, Martha questions the Teacher – shouldn't her sister be helping her? But Jesus affirms Mary as his student.

Mary has chosen the right thing, and it will not be taken away from her

LUKE 10:42

Another day, a Samaritan woman approaches a dusty well to draw water in the blistering midday sun. Other women in her community collect water in the coolest part of the day but because she has had many husbands the Samaritan women is disliked. She comes with her water jar now, alone.

Jesus sits wearily at the same well, and asks the woman for a drink. In that simple act he breaks all appropriate social conventions, engaging in conversation with her directly and in public. Offering her life-giving water, he comes to reveal that he is the messiah, the one her people have been waiting for.

Entrusted with this incredible revelation, she abandons her water jar and goes to tell people in her village. She becomes the first recorded evangelist.

And very early one morning, in the darkness and despair of death and when all the disciples have fled, the resurrected Jesus appears to a group of women. Those whose speech is often discredited and disbelieved become the "apostles to the apostles," bearing the unbelievable news – Jesus has defeated death.

In a strongly patriarchal culture, Jesus' inclusion and empowerment of women was profoundly counter-cultural. By honouring and respecting women, he heralded a different sort of kingdom. In the kingdom of God, the age-old inequality between men and women is broken down. Women are every bit as valued and worthy of respect. They are just as much bearers of God's beautiful image.

Inspired by Jesus and in pursuit of this kingdom, INF seeks to include and empower women in all that it does, so that their reflection of the divine image can shine forth where it has been obscured, dulled, or beaten down.

The impact is life-changing: poverty is reduced, women's and children's health improves, girls can pursue education, and women begin to speak up and enact change for the benefit of their whole community. So until God's kingdom comes completely, we will continue to stand alongside women so that they can experience life in all its fullness – where their God-given gifts and voices can be used to the glory of God.

fun stuff

DANDI BIYO

Dandi Biyo is a game played by any number of players and uses two sticks—the dandi [a 50-60cm long stick] and the biyo [a shorter stick about one-quarter the size of the dandi with pointy or rounded ends].

- To play, first dig a small groove into the ground and lay the biyo across it. One player uses the dandi to flick the biyo as far as possible. Fielding players may attempt to catch the biyo and the striker's turn ends if the biyo is caught.
- If the biyo lands on the ground, a fielder tries to throw it back into the groove, while the striker tries to strike it in mid-air with the dandi. If it lands in the groove, the striker's turn ends.
- But if the biyo is not caught and is not returned to the groove, the striker has three chances to hit it further. This is done by hitting the biyo on its end and then hitting it again as it leaps into the air.
- Whoever knocks the biyo the greatest distance after their three attempts is the winner.

Have fun!

VISIT

Visit the FUN STUFF page on our website for other activities and recipes www.inf.org/resources/fun-stuff



Source: www.prasantbhatt.com/tag/dandibiyo



Please join us to
**JOURNEY
WITH
JUMLA**

Journey with Jumla connects you with communities in Jumla, Nepal, as they work with INF towards 'life in all its fullness.'

By supporting INF's new work in Jumla in prayer and finance [**\$25 per month**], you will also take your own learning journey, joining us for an inside view of community development.

Sign up now at www.inf.org/journey-with-jumla

Photo: Phil Morris

INF offices

NEPAL

PO Box 5, Pokhara, Nepal
T +977 [0]61 520111
F +977 [0]61 520430
info@nepal.inf.org

INTERNATIONAL

PO Box 1230,
Kathmandu, Nepal
T +977 [0]1 552 1183
+977 [0]1 553 9850
+977 [0]1 554 1063
info@nco.inf.org

USA

PO Box 27947, Omaha,
NE 68127, USA
info@us.inf.org

CANADA

PO Box 91112,
Royal Oak R.P.O.,
Calgary, AB T3G 5W6,
Canada
info@ca.inf.org

AUSTRALIA

PO Box 5400,
West Chatswood
NSW 1515, Australia
T +61 [0]2 9411 1195
ausoffice@au.inf.org

NEW ZEALAND

PO Box 91731,
Victoria Street West,
Auckland 1142,
New Zealand
T +64 0272 203931
director@nz.inf.org

UK

24 Weoley Park Road
Selly Oak
Birmingham
B29 6QX
T +44 [0]121 472 2425
enquiries@inf.org.uk